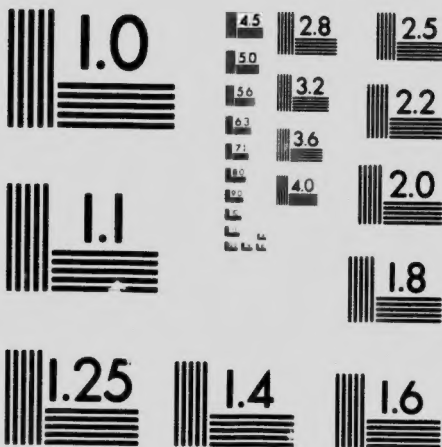




MICROCOPY RESOLUTION TEST CHART
NATIONAL BUREAU OF STANDARDS
STANDARD REFERENCE MATERIAL 1010a
(ANSI and ISO TEST CHART No. 2)

Toronto Public Library

(Dunphrie Collection)

no. 22

A MOTHER IN ISRAEL

A SERMON

PREACHED IN ST. JAMES' CATHEDRAL

TORONTO

++

IN MEMORY OF QUEEN VICTORIA

++

27TH JANUARY, 1901.

THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND PUBLISHING CO., LIMITED

1901.



A MOTHER IN ISRAEL

SERMON

PREACHED IN ST. JAMES' CATHEDRAL

TORONTO

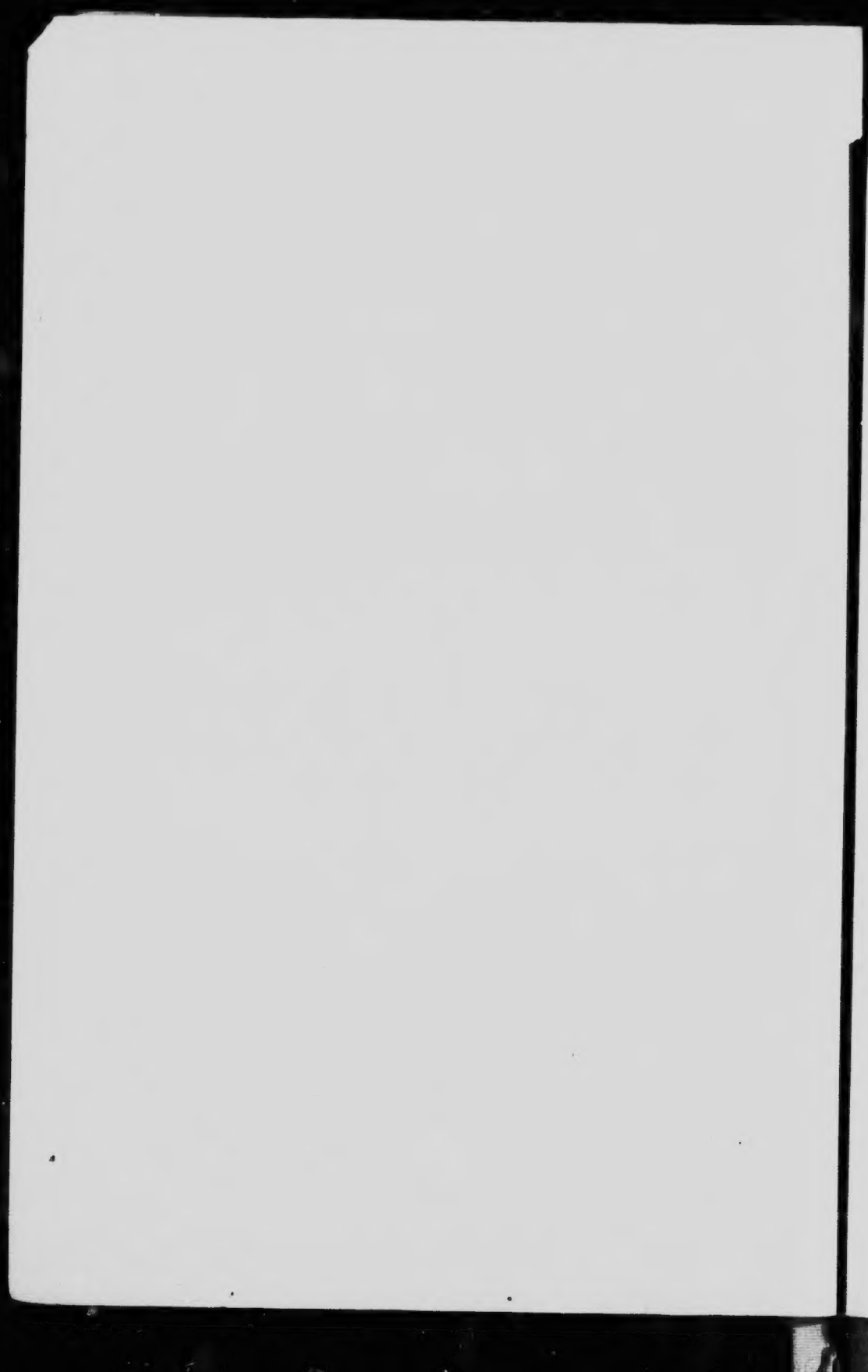


IN MEMORY OF QUEEN VICTORIA



27TH JANUARY, 1901.

THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND PUBLISHING CO., LIMITED.
1901.



IN • PIAM • MEMORIAM
VICTORIAE
REGINAE • IMPERATRICIS
DILECTISSIMAE

Some who heard these words have expressed a wish to have them in permanent form in memory of an occasion which is, and cannot but remain, unique in the lives of all of us. I have, therefore, had them printed, though no one can feel more strongly than I do, how entirely inadequate they are. If any sum is left after expenses are paid, it will be given towards the purchase of a portrait of the Queen to be placed in the school-house.

E. A. W.

A MOTHER IN ISRAEL.

"A mother in Israel."—JUDGES v. 7.

ONE thought to-day finds place in the minds of all the millions of the Empire. It is the preacher's duty to try to give some kind of expression to that thought—not with any poor attempt at flights of rhetoric, but in the simplest words at his command, words that befit the presence chamber of the King of kings, and are not out of keeping with the solemn mystery of death, whose summons no one—prince or peasant, subject or sovereign—may refuse to obey.

A reign, which has been not only the longest, but also in many respects the most glorious, in our nation's life, has, in the providence of God, reached its end. At such a time the mind naturally, almost inevitably,

turns to the records of the past for parallels. If we turn to-day, what is it that we see? It is that history presents no parallels, but only contrasts.

Three Queens in days gone by have sat in lonely splendour on the sovereign throne of England. Of two of them it may be said that their reigns were like the reign that has just closed, in that they were great and distinguished epochs in the history of our literature. And one saw that great expansion of English power, which, in the natural process of events, has led to the Imperialism of the Victorian age.

The contrasts, however, are far more marked than the resemblances. The reign of Mary was a time of chaos and darkness, both in Church and State. Queen Anne was a good and simple soul, but she hardly rose above the commonplace. And when we think of "the spacious days of great Elizabeth," we are struck at once by the difference in character between her for whom we mourn to-day and the greatest of the three Queens who have preceded her. You have only to read of the utter loneliness of Queen Eliza-

beth's last weeks on earth, and the unmoved coldness of her people when she died to see the indications of the contrast of which I speak. I am sure that it is literally true to say that our experience in our Queen has been unique in the history not only of England, but of the world.

A distant likeness is hinted at by the words with which I began—words which suggest more than any others that I could think of in the whole Bible that deep sense of intimate personal loss which every one of us is feeling to-day, a sense which has kept the hymns we have sung, couched though they are in the strongest personal terms, from being in any way unreal to us. She for whom we mourn was indeed, like Deborah, a mother in Israel.

She was called, like Deborah, to guide the destinies of her people at a critical time in the nation's life, when the political horizon was dark with dangers that loomed upon it, when the bands of loyalty to the throne were in some quarters strained almost to breaking, and when, in Canada itself, there was a condition of things which bordered upon civil

war, if not upon open rebellion. Contrast all this with what we witnessed in the year of the Diamond Jubilee, and with all that we have been reading and hearing about during the last week. There can be no doubt whatever that this mighty change is due in very large measure, to the unique personality of the Sovereign whom we have lost.

There were those, I doubt not, in 1837, who feared disaster for the ship of state, because there was a woman's hand upon the helm. To-day we are thanking God that through all these sixty-four years the most exalted throne in Christendom has been occupied by one who has exerted just that influence which only a good and noble woman can exert.

And what we are feeling and expressing here, in our ancestral tongue, and as Christian men and women, is felt in every corner of the Empire, from the lands of the palm to the lands of the pine, and is expressed in many and diverse tongues by Christians of every name and by millions who worship not the one true God.

Nor is it only within the limits of the Empire that these profound emotions have been stirred. In every country in Europe and in the United States it is the same, and few more touching messages have flashed along the wires within the last few days than that which told us of the aged Pope—himself on the verge of eternity—hearing of the Queen's death and, without a word, falling upon his knees to pray for one whose throne was and is an enduring protest against his own jurisdiction on British soil.

And when we ask ourselves what all this really means, there can be but one answer. It is a tribute to the majesty of goodness, and such a tribute as ought to forbid the most cynical to despair of human nature.

This is not the time or place to discuss the political significance of the Queen's life; it is enough to repeat the well-known fact, to which additional testimony was given in the House of Lords, on Friday last, that she possessed a remarkable faculty for the affairs of State, and that her personality counted enormously in the elements which make for the continuance of the peace of Europe.

But it is not her political influence, it is not the fact that under her beneficent rule, there has been an expansion of the Empire, greater than any that men have seen before—it is nothing of this kind that has made the motherless peoples mourn with a deeply felt, widespread grief, such as has never been in all the history of the world. What is it then?

If I had to sum up in a single phrase the secret of Queen Victoria's life, I should do it in the words which a bold monk addressed to a Pope of Rome in the middle of the 12th century, when he told him that his elevation meant "*non dominium, sed officium*," not sovereignty, but duty. A paramount sense of duty was one of the foremost features in the Queen's character, a sense of duty to her subjects which had its origin and its inspiration in her sense of duty to her God.

This high sense of duty kept her from yielding to a temptation, before which many in far less exalted positions have fallen. I mean the temptation to use her influence and power for personal and selfish ends. If ever man or woman acted up to the great

French motto which tells us that *noblesse oblige*, that did our Queen. Generous in the original and secondary sense of that word, of exalted lineage and of selfless character, she exhibited (as we know so well) that tender consideration for others, that gracious and delicate sympathy which made and kept the hearts of her people irrevocably hers. That she entered into their joys and sorrows, that she was grateful for their sympathy in her own, that she was, in a word, their true *friend*;—these are the commonplaces of the last sad days. It well befitted the transparent simplicity of her character, that the Prince, who, two or three hours before she died, had announced, “The life of our beloved Queen is in the greatest danger,” should announce her death by saying not “the Queen,” but “My beloved mother has passed away.” It is just a glimpse into the character of that home circle of which she was the centre, and the influence of which has done so much to keep up the standard of English family life.

It seems strange (as we look back upon it) that

it was in this sphere, where all her highest and tenderest affections were concentrated, that she suffered most. She knew only a little more than twenty years of wedded happiness; then followed nearly forty years of widowhood: of her nine children three have gone before her beyond the veil. Truly her character was chastened and purified in the fiery furnace of affliction, and from it all she came out purer gold. Well did the great Laureate of her reign pray in the thought of her great sorrow,

“ May all love,

“ His love unseen, but felt, o’ershadow thee ;

“ The love of all thy sons encompass thee,

“ The love of all thy daughters cherish thee,

“ The love of all thy people comfort thee,

“ Till God’s love set thee at his side again.”

“ Till God’s love set thee at his side again”—

The day to which he looked forward has come at last,—to our great and irreparable loss, but (as we hope with sure and certain hope) to her everlasting gain.

She has done justly, she has loved mercy, she

has walked humbly with her God, and over all that could die of her will be said the same words of hope that are said over the humblest of her subjects. The good Queen is gone. She has laid aside the outward signs of earthly majesty, and passed into the presence of the King of kings. The Queen is dead indeed ; the Lord God has said : " Remove the diadem, and take off the crown." But that which was most queenly because most truly womanly, the undying spirit, majestic with a majesty not of this world, but as created in the image of God, royal with a royalty not of earth, but as of a redeemed daughter of the eternal King, has entered—as each of us must enter—into the Paradise of God.

There she rests from her labours to preserve in wealth, peace and godliness, God's people who were for a space committed to her charge. There, too, she awaits, as each of us must await, "the resurrection the dead and the life of the world to come," for which (as we know) she looked with strong faith, and earnest hope, trusting in the Saviour, whose she is and whom she strove to serve.

The good Queen is gone, and the worn out frame in which her untiring spirit dwelt, and which her people loved to look upon and ever greeted with loyal and loud acclaim, must now with all honour, and magnificent respect be committed to the dust from which it came. But grander far than all the gorgeous trappings of majestic woe, and all the pomp and pageantry with which it is fitting that she, who but yesterday sat on the most ancient throne of Europe, should be laid amid the historic glories of the past,—grander far than all of this are the tears that a nation sheds, for they well up from hearts that know and feel that to speak of *her* as of *blessed* memory is no formal, empty, unmeaning phrase, but true, utterly true, because she was indeed a mother in our Israel.

The good Queen is gone. She has died in a good old age, and another reigns in her stead. And we are looking forward, not without some fears and misgivings, yet with chastened hope, to the new century, with which the new reign begins. God grant that in it we may learn to practise the les-

son which she had learnt so well,—that it is righteousness alone which exalteth a nation, and that blessed is that people only which has the Lord for its God.

The earnest prayers that have been offered in every quarter of the globe during the last sixty-four years have been most graciously answered. Henceforth we must offer these same petitions for him who in God's Providence now reigns in her stead. His is no light and easy task ; the difficulties and dangers of his position must be many indeed, and his responsibility is heavy in very truth. May God give him grace to bear himself in his high place, as did the best of all that have gone before him. Let our supplications for him be fervent and sincere, as we learn by slow degrees to shape our lips to the unwonted name, which they almost refuse to utter, and with the same earnestness with which we have prayed before to pray now

GOD SAVE THE KING.